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ABSTRACT

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DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN COUNSELOR SELF PERCEPTIONS AND OTHERS PERCEPTIONS OF COUNSELOR ROLE

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Previous studies (Warman, 1960;1961) have indicated consistent differences between how counselors view their role and the attitudes that other members of the campus community have toward counseling functions, such that counselors perceive personal adjustment problems as more appropriate for discussion than college routine or vocational choice problems, which are viewed as more appropriate concerns for counseling by other members of the campus community. Recent investigations in a number of diverse institutions (Ogston, Altmann & Conklin, 1969; Gelso, Karl & O'Connell, 1972; Resnick & Gelso, 1972) have replicated this role discrepency phenomena. However, one aspect of the phenomena which has not been considered is whether the same role differences would result when counselor's perceived role, that is the attitudes held by members of the campus community concerning how they think counselors see themselves, is considered in addition to attitudes toward the counselor's role.

Perceptions of the counselor's perceived role may be formed on the basis of an occupation or stereotype about counselors as well as varying amounts of contact with counselors and/or information about counseling services (Gelso & McKenzie, 1972). Thus if there are attitudinal differences between perceptions

of counselor role and perceptions of counselor's perceived role for certain campus subgroups these differences might aid in identifying groups for whom information about counseling services and roles would be most useful.

In order to implement this goal the present study investigated the following questions: Do members of the campus community (Ss) indicate a discrepency between their own attitudes toward the counselor's role and their view of the counselor's perceived role, that is how they (Ss) think counselors see themselves? Do differences exist both between S's attitudes toward counselors and counselors own role perceptions, as well as differences between S's perceptions of counselor perceived role (that is how the S thinks a counselor sees his or her role) and counselors own role perceptions?

METHOD

Subjects: The Ss were 314 members of the Iowa State campus community who were divided into eight groups as indicated in Table 1. The Ss could be divided into three general categories: Counseling Service Persons (counselors and graduate practicum students); Referral Agents (teaching faculty, student personnel program advisors and undergraduate student residence house leaders); and Actual and Potential Consumers of Counseling Services (volunteer student subjects from the psychology department subject pool, clients seeking personal or vocational counseling, and clients seeking reading and study skills (RSS)

counseling from the Counseling Service. The groups were as representative of each category of the entire campus community as was possible using volunteer Ss. All Counseling Service Persons, Program Advisors and Student Leaders in two residence areas selected at random were contacted and participated in the study. A random sample (N=104) of all teaching faculty of instructor rank or above was drawn and contacted by letter and written questionnaire. The faculty study participants represent a return of 54% of all those contacted. All students who presented themselves at the Counseling Service and who requested RSS or personal or vocational counseling during April and May 1972 were asked to voluntarily participate. The usable returns represent 72% of all RSS clients and 55% of all other clients.

Instruments: The Counseling Appropriateness Check List (CACL) (Warman, 1960;1961) was administered to each S as a measure of perception of counselor role as well as counselor's perceived role. When responding to the CACL a S indicates the degree of appropriateness (1-definitely inappropriate to 5-most appropriate) for discussion with a counselor for each of 66 potential problems. Items on the CACL have been shown (Warman, 1960) to belong to the following categories (factors) of concerns: college routine (CR) 12 items, vocational choice (VC) 14 items, and adjustment to self and others (AS) 40 items.

Procedure: The CACL was administered twice to each S in the same test session, and the instructional set preceeding the CACL was varied to elicit

Ss' perceptions of counselors (standard instructions asking for expression of "your feelings") as well as Ss' view of counselor perceived role (instructions asking S to respond as he thinks a counselor would respond). The presentation order of instruction was counterbalanced within each group of the study. Following the CACL the Ss were asked to rate their agreement to four statements designed to ascertain: whether the instructions preceeding the two CACL's were different, whether responses to one CACL respresented the Ss own feelings, whether responses to the other CACL represented adopting a counselor's viewpoint, and whether the S viewed his responses to the two check lists as different.

RESULTS

Mean CACL scale scores and standard deviations for each factor (CR, VC, AS) under each instruction set are presented in Table 1. Differences between similar factor scale scores under each instruction set for each group and for the total sample were tested by two tailed t tests. Significant differences in attitude between perceptions of the counselor's role (instruction set I) and views of the counselor's perceived role (instruction set II) were found for the total sample ($t=2.18$, $p<.05$) and for the faculty group ($t=1.95$, $p<.05$) on the AS factor of the CACL. The results suggest that Ss indicate a discrepency between their perceptions of counselor role and their (Ss) views of the counselor's perceived role. By adapting

a counselor's viewpoint (instruction set II) the appropriateness of dealing with adjustment problems increases over the S's own attitudes about the appropriateness of adjustment problems for counseling. This discrepency is most pronounced among the faculty who are primarily referral agents, but is absent among other referral agents and consumers of counseling services.

The statements designed to ascertain whether Ss discriminated between the two sets of instructions suggest that Ss see a distinct difference between the two instructional sets (mean rating=4.11 where 5.00 indicates that the instructions were totally different) and that the Ss perceive their responses to the CACL under differing sets of instructions as somewhat different (mean rating=3.36 where 5.00 indicates that responses were completely different).

Regression analyses of variance were performed within each factor scale score under both instruction sets to ascertain between group differences in attitudes. The results suggest significant intergroup differences for the VC ($F=3.82$, $df=7/306$, $p<.01$) and AS ($F=19.25$, $df=7/306$, $p<.01$) factors under instruction set I and significant intergroup differences on CR ($F=2.06$, $df=7/306$, $p<.05$) and AS ($F=20.04$, $df=7/306$, $p<.01$) scale factor scores for instruction set II. Post Hoc analyses of intergroup differences on significant factor scores were carried out with Kramer's modification of Duncan's new multiple range test and indicate that counselors view adjustment problems as significantly ($p<.01$) more appropriate for counseling than all other groups,

except for graduate practicum students and residence area program advisors who share the counselor's attitudes for instruction set I, and that these significant differences ($p<.01$) are maintained even when Ss are asked to respond as they think counselors would view problems (instruction set II).

Table 1 indicates that counselors view vocational choice problems as being slightly but not significantly more appropriate for counseling than other campus groups except for faculty members (instruction set I). When counselors are compared respectively with every other group, only the discrepency between counselors and faculty ratings of vocational choice appropriateness is statistically significant ($p<.01$), such that counselors exceed faculty in their appropriateness scores. However, when Ss are asked to adopt a counselor's view (instruction set II) these intergroup differences diminish ($p<.10$). It would seem that counselors convey much ambivalence about their willingness to deal with vocational choice problems to other members of the campus community. In contrast college routine problems are not seen as differing in appropriateness ($p<.10$) when counselors are compared with other members of the campus community (instruction set I), but when Ss are free to adopt a counselor's viewpoint there is a slight increase in appropriateness ratings of these problems by Ss and significant ($p<.05$) intergroup differences appear. Others think counselors see these routine matters as more appropriate for counseling than do counselors.

DISCUSSION

This study suggests that in the campus community discrepencies exist between perception of counselor's role and views of counselor's perceived role, and that these differences are most pronounced among the faculty who may refer persons to counselors. The results also suggest that faculty view the counselor's perceived role as being more congruent with counselor's own role perception with respect to personal adjustment problems. Counselors, as well as practicum students and residence program advisors, share the view that personal adjustment problems are more counseling appropriate than any other campus group under both instructional sets. In addition, it appears that while counselors convey much ambivalence to the campus community about their willingness to deal with vocational choice and college routine problems, they have succeeded in communicating to their faculty colleagues how strongly they feel about the appropriateness of personal adjustment counseling.

TABLE 1

MEAN CACL SCALE SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS PRESENTED BY FACTORS

Group		Instruction Set I. Your Views CR	VC	AS	II Counselor's Perceived Role CR	VC	AS
Counselors N=15	M	50.7	66.0	188.8	50.7	66.0	188.8
	SD	5.7	4.0	11.3	5.7	4.0	11.3
Practicum N=13	M	48.1	64.2	168.1	49.3	65.2	171.5
	SD	6.4	4.3	30.3	5.7	3.9	23.5
Faculty N=54	M	43.5	57.7	148.0	49.9	59.6	159.6
	SD	8.0	11.8	34.5	7.6	11.5	26.6
Program Advisors N=26	M	47.3	60.3	171.5	46.5	59.7	174.1
	SD	7.3	8.4	26.8	7.0	7.9	20.2
House Leaders N=44	M	50.0	64.9	123.8	50.4	65.0	134.8
	SD	7.6	6.6	36.1	7.4	6.4	31.2
Students N=104	M	50.3	63.5	118.2	51.0	63.9	121.9
	SD	7.8	8.2	29.8	6.7	7.5	33.1
Clients N=19	M	45.3	61.0	125.9	47.5	62.4	136.3
	SD	8.6	8.1	33.2	7.4	8.0	30.9
Clients (RSS) N=39	M	51.3	60.9	138.0	52.0	62.0	140.7
	SD	8.0	9.8	36.5	7.0	9.4	34.9
Total	M	49.6	62.1	136.6	50.2	62.4	143.1
	SD	8.0	9.0	38.3	7.1	9.3	36.2

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